

WHAT'S NEW!

DNRC Conservation Districts Bureau

Jan 2008

Happy New Year Everyone!! The Conservation District Bureau of the DNRC will begin sending monthly "What's New" newsletters to CD's. Our goal is to keep you informed of what is occurring within the DNRC regarding grant deadlines, trainings, 310 news, etc. We hope this will be beneficial to you. Please send Karl any comments, ideas, or suggestions you may have on improving this!

310 Technical Assistance Program and Legal Assistance: The CDB can help obtain technical assistance to Conservation Districts when you have a complicated or potentially controversial 310 application. Sometimes you'll get a complicated application that may need a more technical review. When this is the case, you may want to contact Laurie or Karl, discuss the application, and decide whether or not we should contract with a consultant to review the application, and provide a review report to you. Currently, we have a list of 10 Consulting Firms that we have contracted with to provide this assistance and report back to you, the CD. The consultants report will include findings and recommendations the board may consider in issuing or denying the 310 application. Please contact Laurie or Karl at any time during the year if you feel you may need technical assistance.

As far as Legal assistance, we have on contract, Don MacIntyre to provide legal assistance when needed. Please contact Laurie if your CD may need legal assistance.

What's been going on in CARDD?

Did you know that between July 1st and Aug 31st, DNRC CARDD division has completed grant contracts for 87 projects, totaling over \$6.2 million? And has completed loans for 12 projects totaling almost \$11 million?

Here are examples of grants and loans completed just from July 1st of this year.

Administration and technical assistance grants were awarded to Conservation Districts to assist them in their efforts to conserve water, soil and other renewable resources. Watershed Assistance grants were given to assist watershed groups and CDs formulate plans for their watersheds. Grants were awarded to the Yellowstone Conservation District River Council and the Missouri River Conservation District Council to address conservation issues on these vital Montana rivers.

Renewable Resource Grants (RRG), were made to communities like Bynum, for example, and will assist them in finding a viable water source for their community. Petrolia Irrigation District will use their RR grant to assist them in conserving water by lining their ditches. RRG planning grants have

been awarded to communities such as Manhattan for a Capital Improvements Plan and Bozeman for a source water protection study.

Reclamation and Development Grants (RDGP) have been awarded to Meagher County CD to study the interaction between groundwater and surface water in the Smith River watershed. Other RD grants are used to plug and abandon oil wells. RDGP planning grants have been awarded to Butte Silver Bow local government for planning for growth impacts due to mining and to Missoula County for reclamation planning for the Mattie V Creek Mine.

The State Revolving Loan program has provided low interest loans to eight communities for infrastructure improvements. Communities benefiting from these loans include; \$88,000 for Dodson to rehabilitate its wastewater system; \$3 million to Havre to lay new water/wastewater and storm sewer lining under the reconstruction of Highway 2, and; Big Sky Water and Sewer District borrowed \$5 million to rehabilitate their water system.

What does this mean to you as a Montanan? It means that grant and loan money is being spent in Montana to assure that there is good clean water to drink. It means grant and loan money is being spent in Montana to plan for growth. It means grant and loan money is being spent in Montana on the restoration of resources. It means that in just 8 weeks over \$16 million has been well spent in assisting Montanan's be good stewards for the Last Best Place.

No Adverse Impact Conference: Feb 21-22, Fairmont Hot Springs

Who is doing this project:

The Big Hole Watershed Committee, sponsored by the Beaverhead CD, will host a two-day educational conference on floodplain development regulations issue on February 21-22, at Fairmont Hot Springs. The intended audience will be local and state government personnel involved in land use development and hazards-based decision-making. The conference will also include land owners, ranchers, developers, realtors, and any other stakeholders with an interest in this issue.



Purpose of project:

Local government officials dealing with land-use planning have expressed a desire to better understand their rights and obligations with respect to regulating development in floodplains. A No Adverse Impact Conference will provide planning regulators with solid grounding in legal issues around floodplain development. With this knowledge, they will be more confident in their decisions about development in floodplains that protect private property rights and values of all. In addition, the conference will explore tools and strategies that address landowner concerns regarding regulation impacts on private property rights (for example, transfer development rights).

Project conservation benefits:

The concept of hazards-based regulation will provide knowledge by which to make win-win relationships between landowners, hazards managers and community development officials, developers, emergency managers, wetland managers, and water quality managers. By providing our local officials with a better understanding of the laws that affect them, land use planners will be

better prepared to make decisions that will diminish or prevent improper development which can affect water quality, riparian health, and human health and safety.

What is NAI? NAI is defined as “...an approach that ensures the action of any property owner, public or private, does not adversely impact the property and rights of others.” The objective of NAI is the safe and proper development of land subject to a hazard.

Most people would consider children playing on a highway full of speeding automobiles and trucks to be acting foolishly, in a manner that would almost inevitably lead to tragedy and misery. Yet all too often, the development decisions we make as a society, in areas we know are affected by wildfires, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and other natural processes of our planet, are just as foolish as children playing in traffic.

While these hazards do not go unnoticed, the decision-making process for development is often complicated by legal issues and challenges pertaining to hazards-based regulations. These impediments are inadequate involvement in the development process by those of us who understand and can educate local officials about natural hazards that should be considered in development and the realities of the law as it pertains to protecting the public from poor development decisions. Local officials often indicate that they fear that limiting what property owners can do with their own property might be considered an interference in property rights or an unconstitutional taking of private property. This concern is essentially unfounded with respect to fairly applied, rationally established hazards based regulation

Should CD folks and Watershed coordinators attend? ABSOLUTELY! In my travels across the state, I hear numerous discussions and concerns in the CD world about all the development along streams and rivers. Supervisors are locally based and know the natural resources and hazards in their areas. However, property rights are still an issue, and rightly so. This conference is an excellent starting point for those interested in protecting the natural resource while protecting property rights.

If you are concerned with the amount of stream/riverside development, you should attend this to learn more on how to can address it and protect the natural resources. NAI approach is a watershed approach to minimizing impacts that use a **common sense approach**. Please contact Karl at 444-3022 or kchristians@mt.gov for more info. Early registration is due February 8. AND, there are scholarships available, so jump on this asap!



Montana Winter Grazing Seminar Beef under the Big Sky: Saddle up for the 2008

The 2008 Montana Winter Grazing Seminar is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, Jan. 23-24, at the Sidney Country Club in Sidney, Mont. This year's seminar will feature a great lineup of speakers, a fun, relaxed atmosphere and plenty of opportunities for beef producers to swap ideas and get acquainted.

This year's featured speaker is Kit Pharo of the Pharo Cattle Company in Cheyenne Wells, Colo. Kit's presentation is entitled "From Production to Profit in Ranching." His thoughts and philosophies are geared towards helping ranchers increase their profits. Kit also shares his philosophies in a free bimonthly newsletter and weekly emails. To receive his newsletter and emails, send your request to Kit@PharoCattle.com.

Other topics during the first day include a talk on "Cooperative Monitoring" by Dennis Phillippi, President of the Society for Range Management. South Dakota State University Extension Beef Specialist Ken Olson will make a presentation on "Evaluating Alternative Strategies for Beef Production."

Following the first day of the seminar, a social hour is planned at the Sidney Country Club with music by the XIT Gals. Taylor Brown of the Northern Broadcasting System will be the Master of Ceremonies for the banquet, with Governor Brian Schweitzer (invited) to give the keynote address. Entertainment will follow the keynote address from Ryan Taylor of North Dakota.

The second day of the event will begin with Wayne Burleson speaking on "The Art of Pasture Walking for Solutions." Next will be Dr. Rachel Endecott, the Montana State University Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, with a talk on Biological Risk Management. The seminar will conclude with a local producer panel – topics will include using local by-products for feed supplement, and the effects of oil development in Richland County on area beef producers.

This year's Winter Grazing Seminar is hosted by the Richland County Conservation District, in cooperation with the Governor's Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC) and the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC).

Registration for the seminar begins at 10 a.m. on Wednesday January 23rd. A pre-registration fee of \$35.00 will be accepted through Jan. 11 and \$40.00 thereafter.

For a registration form and more information, contact Julie Goss, Administrator, Richland County Conservation District at julie.goss@mt.nacdnet.net (406) 433-2103 x101 or Heidi Olbert, State Coordinator, Rangeland Resources Program at holbert@mt.gov (406) 444-6619.

CD office equipment:

CDB has funding available to offset the costs of upgrading CDs office equipment. We will pay 75 percent of the cost or \$550, whichever is less. To apply, they have to submit three price quotes of the equipment they want to purchase, a letter requesting the funding and stating their need which must be signed by a supervisor.

RCAC Set-aside funds:

At the last RCAC the council set aside \$10,000 to help offset the cost of supervisors attending the annual meeting in Bozeman. We will pay for the mileage and motel room for one supervisor that attended the meeting. All requests must be in by February 4. At that time, all requests for travel reimbursement will be distributed to conservation districts requesting funds. Depending on the amount of requests we get, we may have to prorate the amount of funding each CD receives. To request funds, fill out the attached travel claim, attach receipts, and have a supervisor sign the form. Call Laurie if you have questions.

Watershed Planning and Assistance Grant Closed for the Season

The grant money for FY 2007 (July 06 – July 07) have been allocated. The next available funds for this will be in July 2008. Applications will be taken in the spring (April or May). Information on the application process for the next funding cycle will be sent out sometime earlier in 2008. Contact David Martin, 444-4253, if you have any questions.

Small Acreage – Magazine Debut

“Big Sky-Small Acres – Rural Living in Montana” a magazine dedicated to help Montana landowners deal with resource issues on their property will be available in January 2008. If you attended the convention you may have seen draft copies of the magazine. Sample copies will be sent to all districts in January. This magazine should provide a good tool to help districts address the issue of urbanization/growth. Contact David Martin, 444-4253, if you have any questions.

TRAINING:

Rolling Rivers Training:

The Rolling Rivers Trailers are currently hibernating awaiting the Spring Trailer Season. Some folks have expressed an interest in training. If you are thinking about training and would like some assistance, contact David Martin, 444-4253.

Supervisors Training:

When: Feb ?? (pending), 2008
Where: Miles City
Contact: **Carol Watts**, Custer Conservation District Administrator, 406-232-7905 ext.103
Karl Christians, CDB, 444-3022

We are currently working on scheduling this training in the Miles City area sometime in February. Stay tuned for more info!

310 Workshop in Park County:

When: Feb 26, 2008 @ 9:00 am
Where: Livingston-Park County Public Library conference room
Contact: Jacquie Nelson, Park Conservation District Administrator, 406-222-2899 ext.111
Karl Christians, CDB, 444-3022
Who: Anyone is welcome to attend to learn the 310 process and the supervisor's role in administering the 310 law!

Other Training

CD's ... if you have a specific area or interest for training, please let Karl know. The CDB will develop training and bring it to you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Subject: CD Finances

Q: Is your Mill Levy calculated correctly?

A: In most counties, the county assessor will compute the mill levy for your conservation district. However, it is really the responsibility of the conservation district to compute your own mill levies. In order to do so, you will need three pieces of information that you can get from your county assessor's office. Here is what you need: 1) A copy of your certified taxable valuation information form. This form is available from your assessor around the first Monday in August. 2) The amount of your newly taxable property. This is provided to you on the same form as your certified taxable valuation information form. 3) A copy of your previous year's "Determination of Tax Revenue and Mill Levy Limitations under Section 15-10-420" form. This form for Fiscal year 2008 can be found at:

[http://doaforms.mt.gov/doaforms/LocalGovernmentForms/AccountingSystemsProgram/02%20Budget%20Reports/levycompFYE2008%20\(2\).xls](http://doaforms.mt.gov/doaforms/LocalGovernmentForms/AccountingSystemsProgram/02%20Budget%20Reports/levycompFYE2008%20(2).xls)

Now is a good time to experiment with the form and to double check your current mill levy. The more you understand about how your taxes are collected, the better position you will be in when you have questions about the amount of tax money your conservation district is receiving.

Subject: CD Finances

Every payment made by the conservation district should have documentation? Whether it is a claim form, a receipt, or invoice, all checks presented for a supervisor signature should have documentation provided. Credit card receipts are NOT proper documentation. Checks should not be signed by conservation district employees.

Subject: oops file!!

Bridges do have their limits!!!



Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB) Staff ... here to assist you!!

The CDB is staffed up and available to help you any way we can. Please call us or email us anytime for assistance or questions. Got a big Project? Maybe we can help with that too!

The next page is a quick run down on who to contact on specific areas.

Meet & Greet the Staff:

This month, we'll focus on Dave Martin!!

David Martin has been with the Conservation Districts Bureau for over 9 years. The major areas he covers include conservation education and watershed grant administration. Education activities include the Rolling River Trailer, small acreages and conservation days/youth camps. For the Rolling River Trailer he coordinates trainings and makes presentations.

He is a member of *Big Sky-Small Acres* a collaborative group that promotes stewardship on small acreages by producing educational materials and providing technical assistance to CDs and other local agencies. He works on statewide education projects such as the Envirothon and the Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp in addition to the occasional presentation at a local conservation days. He also administers the Watershed Planning and Assistance Grant that provides coordination, assessment, and educational funds to CD sponsored watershed activities.

In his spare time Dave loves to be around water, either kayaking or canoeing. He also loves to visit Spanish speaking places whenever Mr. Checkbook allows.

You can reach Dave at 444-4253, or email him at damartin@mt.gov.



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Calendar

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Contact:</u>
Jan 9:	310 Committee Meeting in Helena	lzeller@mt.gov
Jan 21:	Holiday	
Jan 23-24:	Winter Grazing Seminar in Sidney	holbert@mt.gov
Feb 5:	Stillwater County CD Realtors Workshop	damartin@mt.gov
Feb 20-21	"No Adverse Impact Conference" at Fairmont	kchristians@mt.gov
Feb 26:	310 Workshop in Park County	kchristians@mt.gov
Feb ?	Supervisors training in Miles City	kchristians@mt.gov

(CD's... send me dates on your big activities and we'll put em on the calendar.)

<u>Deadlines:</u>		<u>Contact:</u>
Feb 4	Applications for MACD Travel set-aside funds	lzeller@mt.gov
Mar 14	223 Grant Applications	lzeller@mt.gov
July:	Watershed Planning & Assistance Grant Applications	damartin@mt.gov
Anytime:	Education Mini Grants	rcampbell@mt.gov
Anytime:	310 Legal and Technical Assistance	lzeller@mt.gov or kchristians@mt.gov